



Partners of Root-Pike WIN include: Racine Community Foundation, SC Johnson Fund, YWCA River Bend Nature Center, Sustainable Racine, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and University of Wisconsin-Extension.

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## CONTACT US

To protect, restore, and sustain the ecosystem in the watersheds through the funding and facilitation of a regional network of locally-initiated projects.

## OUR MISSION

Foster the Root-Pike and adjacent Lake Michigan watersheds so that the integrity of the land, water, and air resources are protected and enhanced, while maintaining the strength and sustainability of the regional economy, and contributing to the health and social well being of all community members.

## OUR VISION



Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Racine, WI  
Permit No. 1524

c/o YWCA River Bend Nature Center  
3600 N. Green Bay Road  
Racine, WI 53404



Connecting to Preserve, Promote, Protect



ROOT-PIKE  
WATERSHED  
INITIATIVE  
NETWORK

# THE ROOT-PIKE WATERSHED

The Root-Pike Watershed is located in the Southeast Corner of Wisconsin. It cover 327 square miles over parts of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha Counties. The watershed is sometimes called a “basin” because it is really composed of five smaller watersheds: the Root River, Pike River, Pike Creek, Oak Creek, and Wind Point Watersheds. Together, this area contains 5 major lakes, 450 miles of streams and rivers, 8,500 acres of wetlands, and many miles of Lake Michigan Shoreline. Nearly 300,000 people call the Root-Pike Watershed home and steady population growth is expected into the foreseeable future.

Water was key to this area’s settlement. Lake Michigan and the waterways that empty into the lake provided transportation and sustenance to Native Americans and early settlers. Although the Root and Pike Rivers, and their many tributaries, meander through a growing urban landscape, the watershed was a mix of forests, prairies,

and wetlands, drained by clean water streams less than 200 years ago. Today, despite tremendous urbanization, farmland still makes up 20% of the watershed, and more than 3500 acres of critical natural habitat remain.

Wildlife viewing, recreational, and educational opportunities abound in more than 38 city and county parks including River Bend and Wehr Nature Centers, Petrified Spring County Park, Whitnal Park, Chiwaukee Prairie, Carthage College and UW-Parkside. Sections of the Root River are considered world class fisheries when thousands of trout and salmon migrate up the river each Spring and Fall. The public can spend an afternoon viewing this spectacle for free at the Root River Steelhead facility in Racine’s Lincoln Park, canoe a section of the Root River, hike or bike a trail, or pleasure boat on Lake Michigan. More than 100 rare plant, animal and habitat communities are still found in the watershed including the Karner Blue Butterfly, Blanding’s Turtle, and the Longear Sunfish.

Polluted stormwater runoff is a problem for most rivers, streams and lakes in the watershed. Soil erosion from poorly managed construction sites, farmlands, and stream banks is the largest source of this pollution. Contaminated runoff from parking lots, and other paved surfaces compounds the problem. Other environmental problems include the historic destruction of wetlands, the straightening of streams, and the continued loss of undeveloped land.

Lake Michigan provides the drinking water for over 80% of the residents in the watershed and groundwater serves the rest. Groundwater contamination and over-use are both concerns in the watershed with seepage from failing septic systems, and the loss of groundwater recharge areas posing the largest threats.

*Information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional planning Commission.*





## WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is an area of land that drains or “sheds” its water to streams and lakes. All runoff water, including rainfall and melting snow, in our watershed flows into area creeks and rivers and their tributaries, and eventually into Lake Michigan. As water flows over the land it picks up pollutants and sediment from many sources. Cities, towns, roads, farmland, and parkland all can affect water quality in the Root-Pike Watershed.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MY WATERSHED?

Individuals and organizations may become involved in protecting our watershed in any of the following ways:

### • Daily Activities

You can protect our watershed through some simple steps around your home and neighborhood. These include using water conservatively, making sure that only clean water flows off your land into the storm drains (which empty into local streams and Lake Michigan), and landscaping your home to maximize water infiltration and reduce runoff.

*For more ideas contact your local UW-Extension office or look on the web at:*

<http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs>

You can also call the UWEX Infosource Hotline:

Kenosha County, 262-857-7901 or 262-595-2030

Milwaukee County, 414-290-2450

Racine County, 262-886-8460

Waukesha County, 414-548-7770

### • Volunteer

Root-Pike WIN volunteers review projects and determine which ones will receive grants. Our volunteers have diverse backgrounds. Some work on land or water issues for a living, others paddle, fish, or bird watch in our watersheds, and many work with others to improve our watersheds. Contact us if you are interested in volunteering.

### • Contribute to Root-Pike WIN

Local foundations, individuals and businesses support Root-Pike WIN. Our contributors are our partners and are invited to be active participants. Root-Pike WIN contributors are involved in the Funding Network that meets twice a year to approve the recommended projects. If you would like to become a Root-Pike WIN partner or make a financial contribution call us at 262-638-0482.

### • Submit a Project

Do you have an idea of how to improve our watershed? If so, please submit a project to WIN. See the project information section to the right to learn more about Root-Pike WIN's application process.

## PROJECTS



photo by Melissa Warner

Root-Pike WIN awards grants to a variety of community-based projects. The application process is designed to be interactive and supportive. Applicants work with the Task Groups to consider ways to develop their project to ensure a successful result. Grants are awarded twice a year, in April and November. Inquiries and applications may be submitted year-round.

Projects are evaluated based on the degree to which they meet Root-Pike WIN's mission and vision, follow recommendations or best management practices from community agencies, and protect unique environmental, archeological, or cultural areas. Projects for consideration should also be capable of duplication elsewhere in the watershed, encourage partnerships and leverage resources, balance a long-term focus with short-term results, and foster a sense of pride and identification in the watershed.

Contact Root-Pike WIN for more information on how to apply:

2043 Green Street • Racine, WI 53402

262-638-0482 • [info@rootpikewin.org](mailto:info@rootpikewin.org)

Visit [www.rootpikewin.org](http://www.rootpikewin.org) to learn more about projects Root-Pike WIN has funded.

## WHAT IS ROOT-PIKE WIN?

Root-Pike WIN is a grassroots collaborative that awards grants and offers assistance to projects that help protect and improve our watershed. Volunteers with Root-Pike WIN review and refine project proposals in cooperation with the applicant.

**Resource Group** The Resource Group is comprised of all of the Root-Pike WIN volunteers. They meet twice a year to vote on which projects to recommend for funding. Resource Group members also work on at least one Task Group.

**Task Groups** Task Groups are committees that review all of the project applications. Each of Root-Pike WIN's four Task Groups focus on a specific watershed issue. Projects are assigned to an appropriate Task Group that works with the applicant to assure a quality project is the result.

**Steering Committee** The Steering Committee is responsible for handling staff, financial, marketing, and policy issues. They maintain the integrity of Root-Pike WIN and ensure that all actions meet the vision and mission of Root-Pike WIN.

**Funding Network** The Funding Network consists of representatives from Root-Pike WIN contributors. The Funding Network reviews the Resource Group's recommended projects and approves funding.

